

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2004

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

ANC MUSINGS Bill Jacobs

The Judges' Score

Victoria's overall performance in the ANC teams this year would rate a healthy 7.5 out of 10.

The **Open** team survived a blanket finish in the round robin to qualify for the final in first place – five teams ended up within 25 imps of each of other: compare this to 2003, where the difference between first and third was 203 imps!

In the first 20 boards of the final against ACT, the team blew its 1 imp carryover ... plus 81 more. A full analysis of these boards can be found on pages 682-690 of this bulletin. The margin was clawed back to 43 imps in the end, but ACT was never seriously threatened.

The **Womens** team finished fifth out of seven. The official ANC odds had them at 13/2 with the comment: *"A chance, but past experience (e.g 1996) indicates that by the end of two weeks' work, the Convenor and ANC organisers will find playing top bridge as well too tough."*

This reference to Jeannette Collins, Jenny Thompson and Margaret Yuill strikes me as appropriate – and I have reminded myself to write an editorial for the February 2012 bulletin advising against organisers actually playing in the ANC event!

The **Seniors** were magnificent, giving the strong South Australian squad a shellacking in the final. Read Charlie Snashall's report later in this bulletin to find out the secret of their success.

Our **Youth** team finished fifth out of six, which doesn't sound great, but in fact was one place higher than last year. These were school-age players, up against far more experienced players, and playing in the event could only have been beneficial for their bridge development.

On selection methods

Saying nice things about tournament committees is a dirty job, but someone has to do it. Victoria has got its selection mechanisms right. First up is the Open, which is based on a playoff between a Butler-selected team and the Pennant winners. This has been producing consistently good teams: indeed in the past six years, our Open team has never finished lower than third place.

By qualifying the Open team first chronologically, all players have the opportunity to contest for the major team. On failing that, Women, Seniors and Youth can look to the restricted events.

This happened par-excellence for the Seniors, with Grant Kilvington, Charlie Snashall and Bob Gallus, having narrowly lost the Open Playoff, then contesting the Seniors and qualifying in a strong squad that went on to win the ANC.

Moreover, the mechanism being used to qualify these teams is effective. A Butler event is played, with first place automatically qualifying, and second place choosing teammates from third to fifth to play a head-to-head match. The beauty of this mechanism is that it "smooths out" the luck variations of Butler scoring. The leading pair in a Butler will usually be competent, and deserve their place in the team. The second placed pair deserve to have a choice of teammates. And the head-to-head match will qualify the stronger set of two pairs.

The same method was played in the Womens, but the field was not as strong. Felicity Beale and Diana Smart, which was another pair in the losing Open Playoff team, didn't take up the opportunity to contest for the Women's team. Apparently this was due to the time pressures involved with playing for Australia later in the year in Istanbul. Fair enough, but in future years I look forward to strong players like this (and others like Meredith Woods) competing for the Women's team if their Open aspirations don't work out.

On team shirts and dollars

It was a near-run thing. Cathy Chua rang me a week before the ANC and asked "what's your shirt size?". "Large," I responded, "why?" "Oh, the VBA is organising team shirts for ANC reps – unfortunately there are no large ones left, so you will have to go without."

Well, thank the Lord for that, because I wouldn't have worn it anyway. Why would the bridge club waste perfectly good dollars on something that adds absolutely zero value to the performance of its reps? If the club wants to do something constructive, get the players some books on card play, or buy some subscriptions to OK Bridge so they can get more practice.

Well, up we fronted to Dallas Brooks, and blow me down if most of the states, including Victoria, weren't in team uniform. Queensland in maroon (they didn't look like rugby players to me), NSW in blue, etc. Even Leigh Gold had a NSW shirt on, and he was just playing in the one-day Pairs!

On non-playing captains

I've always thought that the role of NPCs is overrated, particularly in the ANC with its 3x24 matches per day. All the NPC has to do is to choose how the three pairs will rotate each day, put the lineup in, then head for the bar.

This ANC proved my theory wrong with two NPC-related incidents. In the seniors, the John Stretton – Victor Muntz partnership didn't survive the fourth day, despite having performed creditably in the seven sets they played. I have heard varying accounts of how effectively this difficult situation was handled by the NPC. It does strike me, however, that it might have been a whole lot worse without an NPC at all.

The Open team did operate without an NPC (and has in fact done so for the last three years). This didn't seem a problem, *until* a consensus lineup decision for the second stanza of the final went horribly wrong. It might be hindsight (well it *is* actually), but the presence of an NPC would probably have resulted in a better decision being made.

NPCs mean extra costs for the VBA for seven ANC's out of eight (airfares and per-diems). I would like to see teams sharing an NPC so that a maximum of two people for the four teams are used in this capacity, to cut costs.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ K103
 Vul: Nil ♥ K1053
 ♦ AJ97
 ♣ 107

♠ 4
 ♥ Q642
 ♦ 10862
 ♣ AJ96

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♠	All pass	1♠

You lead ♦2, to the ♦J, ♦Q and ♦K. Next comes ♠2 to dummy's ♠10 and partner's ♠A. Partner switches to ♣3, declarer plays ♣K and you win ♣A. Your ♣J wins the next trick, partner following ♣2. What next?

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ KJ98
 Vul: Nil ♥ 974
 ♦ AK53
 ♣ J7

♠ A1052
 ♥ J832
 ♦ J109
 ♣ 42

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT*
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	All pass	

* 12-14.

You lead ♥2 and see that North has been very conservative. Partner wins ♥A, dropping ♥Q and continues ♥5 to ♥K. Partner ducks one round of clubs (showing an even number) and takes ♣A on the second, cashes ♥10 and puts you on play with ♥J. What is your next card?

Solutions on page 8.

ASK BILLIAN

In this new segment, readers are invited to pose questions of any nature, well, preferably relating to bridge, to co-editors Bill Jacobs and Ian McCance. The simplest way to do this is to use email, to either:

Bill.jacobs@oz.quest.com or
ianmcc@melbpc.org.au

Alternatively, you can write to the VBA, or catch up with us one night at the club.

A reader sent us the following question:

"We play two of a major as showing 5 cards in that major, plus a minor, with less than opening values. How should we play if the next hand overcalls three of a minor? Our group has been discussing what a double should mean, for example in the auction 2♥ opening followed by a 3♣ overcall. The consensus was that double should say: 'pass if your minor is clubs, and bid 3♦ if your minor is diamonds'. What do you think?"

BJ: Ambiguous preemptive openings can cause problems for both parties! It is certainly plausible to play it the way you have suggested – (A) double here is essentially a "pass or correct" mechanism. This allows you to punish an opponent who accidentally strays into your partner's second suit.

The alternative approach is to play (B) simple penalty doubles.

Let's take your example auction: 2♥ - 3♣ overcall. If you hold:

(1) ♠ AQxxx ♥Ax ♦ QJ10x ♣ xx

you certainly want to be playing method (A): by doubling you either defend 3♣ doubled if partner has clubs, or compete with diamonds if partner has diamonds. If playing (B) penalty doubles, you are up the proverbial creek without a paddle. The odds favour partner holding diamonds, but if you advance 3♦ and it turns out partner had clubs all along, well, you don't want to think about what will happen then.

Now let's change your hand slightly to:

(2) ♠ AQxxx ♥Ax ♦ xx ♣ QJ10x

Same auction. Now you want to be playing good old-fashioned penalty doubles.

Which scenario is more likely? It's impossible to say, because these auctions don't come up

often, so there is no "experience bank" to make a withdrawal from. I myself play (B), just penalty doubles, but don't feel religious about it. The important thing of course is to be on the same wavelength as your partner!

By the way, an analogous situation can occur if you open a 2♦ Multi, and next hand overcalls two of a major. Should double be "pass if they've bid your major, bid your suit otherwise" or penalties?" In this scenario, I definitely recommend simple penalty doubles, because the odds on them walking into your partner's weak two suit are very low.

What do you think, Ian?

IMcC: The two example hands say it all. With (1) double = pass-or-convert option works better. With (2) double for penalty works better. Which is more likely? For the double to be converted (partner passes) requires the first two hands to have 10 or 11 clubs, and we have two. For partner to have diamonds requires nine between partner's and ours, consistent with a shortage in the hand overcalling.

So on the grounds of probability I prefer the penalty double. With hand (1) I'll bid 3♦, pass-or-convert. If this elicits 3♥ I won't be pleased because of the 6-0 clubs!

As to the situation after 2♦ - (2♥/♠), now the first two hands would need to hold 12 cards in the major, very unlikely, so I would play double = penalty.

BJ: So both editors agree that simple penalty doubles is the method of choice, based on expected frequency. And if you take our advice and are promptly faced with hand (1), then don't call us, we'll call you.



How to guess a queen (1)

The charismatic champion of yesteryear, Hal Sims, was playing two ladies and faced a blind two-way guess for the club queen. He turned to LHO and said: "you look like a lady with the queen of clubs!". She giggled and replied: "why Mr Sims, how ever did you know?"

SENIORS AT THE ANC Charlie Snashall

The Victorian Seniors team (pictured right: George Gaspar (npc), Victor Muntz, Charlie Snashall, Grant Kilvington, David Smith, Bob Gallus, absent: John Stretton) carried all before it at this years ANC held at the Dallas Brooks Hall.



A grueling 24 boards x 14 match double round robin saw us finish 2nd to South Australia and hence secure a place in the final.

This hand from the second round robin was very nicely played by John Stretton. His performance was backed up by deceptive defence at the other table by Grant Kilvington.

Dlr: W	♠ 1063
All vul	♥ J7654
	♦ K6
	♣ 532
♠ AKQ8	♠ J92
♥ Q108	♥ 92
♦ AJ7	♦ 98542
♣ KQ9	♣ 1064
	♠ 754
	♥ AK3
	♦ Q103
	♣ AJ87

Both Wests played in 2NT on a heart lead. John's South won the heart king and he played the ten, inducing South to think that the queen was short. Accordingly he cashed the ace and was disappointed to see John follow low. John won the next heart and then played the club king won by South with the ace. The diamond switch was won by John who played a spade to the jack and finessed the club nine for his 8th trick. Nicely done!

At our table Grant won the heart ace and returned the 3. Declarer slotted the 10 losing to my jack. A third heart to Grant's king followed by a diamond switch saw us emerge with 7 tricks and 8 valuable imps for Victoria.

The Final was a 60 board match played in 6 x 10 board segments. We got off to a flyer with a 54 to 1 first set.

This board produced 12 imps:

Dlr: N	♠ AQ7
N/S vul	♥ 10
	♦ KQ876
	♣ 10642
♠ 108	♠ 643
♥ Q9862	♥ 743
♦ J3	♦ A10952
♣ A875	♣ KQ
	♠ KJ952
	♥ AKJ5
	♦ 4
	♣ J93

At our table South opened 1♠ and North splintered. South rebid 4♠ and this auction pretty much marked a trump lead. Grant played a second trump when in with diamond ace and now there was no way to make the hand.

At the other table where David Smith was declarer, West led the diamond jack. After winning the ace, East played the club king then queen, David following with the 9 and jack. West fell from grace by not overtaking and giving a ruff, but this is not at all clear¹. The trump switch came too late and David was able to negotiate two heart ruffs in dummy for 10 tricks and +620.

¹ Not clear indeed! One way to work these situations out is for West to reason that with KQ3, East would lead king then low, so she should overtake the queen. But playing king then low from KQ3 could work out badly for other reasons. Alternatively, East might have reversed the order of her clubs, leading the queen and then king. This would serve as an "alarm clock signal", telling partner to overtake. However, should *South* have the club ace, switching to the club queen could confuse the subsequent defence. This is a messy situation, with no definitive answers. (BJ)

The next hand was a good team effort.

Dlr: W	♠ 1052	
NS vul	♥ Q104	
	♦ 953	
	♣ Q973	
♠ Q64		♠ AK973
♥ 63		♥ K982
♦ J10876		♦ A42
♣ A62		♣ K
	♠ J8	
	♥ AJ75	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ JT854	

Both tables played in 4♠ by East on a club lead to the king. With eight top tricks what is the best line to produce two more? One could play for the heart ace onside and ruff a heart. Alternatively a diamond honour could be doubleton in the North hand or KQ could be doubleton in either hand. Both declarers found a way to combine both chances. At trick two, they led a small heart from hand. Against Grant, North won and led a trump taken by dummy with the queen. A heart to the king lost to the ace and a trump was returned. Grant won this and ruffed a heart with dummy's last trump. Now he was in the right hand to try his second chance. He pitched a heart on the club ace and finessed the diamond jack won by South who returned a club. Grant ruffed, drew the last trump and laid down the diamond ace. Bingo!

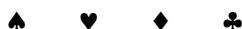
At the other table the same first two tricks found Bob Gallus on lead as North at trick three. Bob didn't find the lazy trump return but instead led back a club. This forced declarer to take an early pitch but also gave him a third option. If the heart ace was offside he might still be able to ruff two hearts provided either North or South held four hearts and three trumps. West seized this opportunity to go wrong and discarded a diamond on the club. He was soon scoring up -50 giving us 10 imps in the plus column. Well done at both tables.

The next hand showcases Grant, who had been in sparkling form all week bringing in some great results. This sweet little number was worth 11 imps and was a body blow to South Australia.

Dlr: N	♠ 97	
Nil vul	♥ A108	
	♦ K10974	
	♣ 1094	
♠ AK10653		♠ Q82
♥ 32		♥ K54
♦ Q8		♦ A52
♣ 653		♣ AKJ7
	♠ J4	
	♥ QJ976	
	♦ J63	
	♣ Q82	

West played in 4♠ after East had shown a strong 1NT. Grant found the devilish lead of the heart 8! The unsuspecting declarer played low and I won the jack. My diamond switch went to the queen, king and ace. Declarer drew two rounds of trumps and exited with a diamond won by me with the jack. A third diamond put declarer in his own hand and he was at the crossroads. He played a club to the ace and Grant followed with the 9. Two rounds of trumps followed with Grant pitching a diamond and a heart and when he played a club up, Grant followed with the ten. Declarer was convinced I held the heart ace and Grant the club queen. He nearly fell off his chair when I won that card and returned a low heart to Grant's ace. One off. At the other table North led the diamond ten and David had no trouble racking up 11 tricks and 11 IMPS to the good guys. Well done Kilvo!

The final margin was 91 imps but this does little justice to South Australia who fought hard all the way with very little luck. They were gallant losers. Thanks to my teammates David Smith, Bob Gallus, John Stretton, Victor Muntz and my partner Grant Kilvington for playing so well. Thanks also to George Gaspar for being our Captain and doing all the boring stuff on our behalf.



UPDATE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

With the ANC behind us, we are now in full swing to upgrade **Membership Services** and provide more services and events at the Club. We are gathering information from members on what YOU want to have at YOUR Club. The information is being gathered via surveys at sessions over the next week. Thank you for all those who have completed the survey to date. The results and findings will be published in the next Newsletter and, hopefully, we will be trialling some new events by then.

Thank you also to everybody assisting us in updating the **Membership Data Base**. It had been somewhat neglected and now that we are in possession of correct contact details, we will be able to mail and email important messages to you. Special thanks to Cathie Lachman and the volunteer services of Jenny Atkinson and Hazel Schwerdt in pulling this key initiative together.

We are pleased to announce that we have secured **Sponsorship** by "Toorak Travel" for the Victorian Open Pairs starting on Wednesday 6 October and by "VIP Home Services" for the VBA Mixed Pairs starting on Monday 22 November. Keep these free in your diary and register early as there will be some exciting prizes, to be announced shortly. If at all possible, please support these sponsors and, in return, the continuing sponsorship will benefit you and all members of the club.

If anyone would like their business to **Sponsor** an event, please contact me as soon as possible. We can tailor the activity to meet your budget and, where possible, we accept sponsorship in kind, i.e., product or service. With early advice, the details can be printed in the VBA Calendar for 2005, thereby ensuring good coverage for your sponsorship dollar.

Intermediate Lessons, commencing on Tuesday night 7 September, will run over 6 weeks. Please refer to the advertisement opposite. The next **Beginners' Classes** (refer advertisement on next page) will start on Thursday night 30 September and continue for 8 weeks. We welcome any enquiries and would appreciate members passing these details to friends and relatives who may be interested.

The **Winter 2004 Inter-Club Teams Competition** concluded on Tuesday night 24 August and our congratulations go to the winners, The Royal South Yarra Tennis Club. The participants were

most impressed with the event and are soundly supporting a **Summer Competition** in February/March 2005. We believe that we will get an even bigger field for this event and I encourage members to promote participation by any golf/tennis/social clubs where they hold memberships.

For any members seeking a partner, wishing to form a team or wanting to communicate similar matters, we now have a free service on our website at www.vba.asn.au in the "**Wanted Known**" column. Please avail yourself of this service - it is **FREE**-by emailing your entry to info@vba.asn.au. Certain guidelines do apply.

Tell Family and Friends



INTERMEDIATE LESSONS

When? Tuesday 7th September to 12th October 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Where? VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbidgee

Cost? \$145 per person, includes:

- 6 weeks of 2 hour lessons
- Certificate on completion
- 3 Free Supervised Playing Sessions upon completion

Course Content

The Takeout Double & Responses

Rebids By Opener & Responder

The Opening Lead

Teacher: Hakan Lyngsjo

Phone: 9530-9006 **E-Mail:** info@vba.asn.au

The club needs your **HELP** to fix a few problems without breaking the bank. Firstly, you may be one of a large number of people who can't get through on the phone as the line is busy or "nobody answers". It is, no doubt, frustrating for you and particularly frustrating for staff as we are here and always answer the phone but we have only 2 lines which are often in use at the same time. We need a mini-exchange to solve the problem. If anyone can direct us to a cheap, second-hand **Commander-style System**, we would be very appreciative.

BEGINNER'S LESSONS		
Tell your Friends and Family		
When?	Thursday 7.30 pm-9.30 pm starting 30 September	
Where?	VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbena	
Cost?	\$105 per person, includes:	
	- 8 weeks of 2 hour lessons	
	- Certificate on completion	
	- 3 Free Supervised Playing Sessions upon completion of course	
Teacher:	Cathie Lachman	
Phone:	9530-9006	E-Mail: info@vba.asn.au

Secondly, we had an illegal entry into the building in the early hours of last Tuesday morning. Apart from bolstering our sensor security, we need proper full-length **Curtains** on the back glass doors (this is where the intruder entered) to ensure security and privacy at night. Curtains will also help reduce our heating and cooling expenses. We need a volunteer to help make the curtains. We will supply, or pay for, the materials. Please contact me, at any time, if you can help.

On the issue of **Security**, I would ask all members to report to me, or their Director at night, any suspicious behaviour or activity, particularly the presence of anyone in the building, or VBA car park, who does not appear to have a legitimate reason for being at the club.

The issue of **Parking** comes up yet again. Lately, the problem has been more to do with careless and thoughtless behaviour. The latest examples include VBA patrons parking across private driveways, blocking-in the owner's vehicle at the local garage and parking up on nature strips. These are all silly and avoidable acts that, understandably, annoy our neighbours and dent the club's reputation. They can all be avoided if everyone takes the time to park and check that they are not doing something which they would not want done to them!! The alternative is to face some fairly severe penalties under the Disciplinary By-Laws of the VBA Constitution, especially for repeat offenders.

Finally, please make a note in your diary that the **VBA AGM** will be held on Monday night 6 December. We would like to see as many members as possible attend for what is a major event in shaping the future of your club.

Happy Bridging,

David Costelloe
General Manager

